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ABSTRACT

This yearly evaluation report of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) program in Dayton, Ohio, presents research results for five areas of program assessment. These areas are (1) measurement of four- and five-year-olds' educational experiences and development in areas such as cognitive skills and personal-social responsiveness, using the Caldwell Preschool Inventory and the Walker Readiness Test for Preschool Disadvantaged Children; (2) an investigation of continuous growth performance over seven months with three administrations of the Walker test; (3) an evaluation of children's performance on 83 individual performance objectives, consisting of basic skills necessary for doing successful kindergarten and primary level work; (4) program assessments made by kindergarten and first grade teachers in a voluntary opinion survey; and (5) a preliminary followup of former ECE children in special assistance reading programs. Results of the two criterion instruments measuring the children's experiences and development indicated that program found, and seven individual program objectives were attained by the majority of children assessed. Teachers who responded to the survey (approximately 1/3 of the available sample) gave significant support to cognitive features of the program. The number of ECE-trained children who enrolled in remedial reading programs in kindergarten through grade 4 was relatively small. (Author/SE)

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PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF ECE FY 1978

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P S Y C H O L O G I C A L E V A L U A T I O N

A COMPONENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM
ESEA TITLE I, FY 1978

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM EVALUATION

In September, 1965, the Dayton Public Schools initiated the Early Childhood Education Program (ECE), with a small pilot group of four schools, each having a significantly large number of socio-economically disadvantaged families. In March, 1966, twelve additional schools were included in the program. Since then, the program has grown, at times, to as many as thirty centers.

This year, Fiscal Year 1978, marked the thirteenth year of operation and included 26 centers. The evaluation plan has changed several times during the time span since 1965, but remained fairly consistent between the years 1968-69 and 1974-75. During those years, resources and regulations permitted in-depth evaluations of a large sample of children enrolled in the ECE Program and longer-term measurements of the program's impact on children's performances following involvement with ECE. The in-depth evaluations had been conducted by school psychologists, since many of the measurements required more professional skills.

In 1975-76, the broader, in-depth studies were terminated because of a required shift in the program to specific performance objectives. Data were obtained through FY 77 on the performance objectives, along with the analyses of the two large-scale measures and the continued assessment of the longer term effects of the ECE Program, viz., in kindergarten and the first and second grades.

Actually, the results over the ten years became so generally consistent and predictable that it was probably redundant and unnecessary to continue the in-depth studies. The comparison of those results with other major early childhood pre-school programs throughout the country will be discussed in much greater detail in the Summary Section.

I. EVALUATION OF ECE ENROLLEES

During the 1977-78 school year, a total of 1,124 four- and five-year-old children was enrolled at one time or another in the Dayton ECE Program. These children attended either morning or afternoon classes in 26 centers. There was a total of 59 classes in the 26 centers.

The evaluation this year focused on five areas:

(1) Program objectives, as measured by two major instruments;

(2) An empirical investigation of performance growth on one of the two criterion instruments;

(3) Individual performance objectives;

(4) Teacher assessments; and

(5) Tentative follow-up data on enrollees in Title I and DPPF Reading Programs.

Material from each of these areas will be presented in subsequent sections.

Goal of Program and Program Objectives

The Walker Readiness Test for Disadvantaged Pre-School Children (1) has been employed for the past five years. The results had been used to select children for admission to the ECE Program since the 1972-73 school year, when a qualifying standard for admission was imposed. The Walker Test was administered individually by teachers, consultants, and social workers in early September, 1977, and again in mid-May, 1978.

The well-known Pre-School Inventory - Revised Edition, 1970, developed by Dr. Bettye M. Caldwell (2) (and hereafter referred to as the Caldwell) was used three years ago for the first time. It was administered this year by late September, 1977, and again in

mid- to late May, 1978, for the post-evaluation phase. Previous results with the Caldwell had suggested that increased familiarity with children's potentials and expectations of better performances made teachers overly generous in evaluating their abilities to perform the various tasks. The results indicated very strongly that initial scores were considerably inflated because of teachers' leniency and failures to adhere to the scoring standards. To eliminate some of the bias, teachers administered the Caldwell soon after children were assigned to classes in the fall of 1977, instead of waiting until they had become familiar with them and had created possible prejudices. This year's results appeared to confirm the hypothesis.

Description and Scoring of Criterion Tasks

The Walker Readiness Test for Disadvantaged Pre-School Children (1) is described as a culture-fair, non-verbal test for rural and urban disadvantaged children, available in two forms: A and B. Each form is divided into four sections: 25 similarities items, 15 differences items, 5 numerical analogies items, and 5 missing parts items. The items are composed of pictures, figures, and symbols not necessarily associated with any particular kind of culture or environment. The item form is multiple-choice, not requiring reading ability, but testing listening ability, visual acuity, and recognition of similarities, differences, numerical analogies, and missing parts. The child is required only to point to one of the four choices per item. Scoring is the number of items answered correctly. Percentile ranks for total scores for children of different age levels (in intervals of 6 months) are available in each form.

The Pre-School Inventory (Caldwell) is a brief assessment and screening instrument designed for individual use with children in the age range of three to six years. It was developed to give a measure of achievement in areas regarded as necessary for success in school. It is not considered culture-free. In fact, one aim in its development was to provide educators with an instrument that would permit them to "highlight the degree of disadvantage which a child from a deprived background has at the time of entering school so that any observed deficits might be reduced or eliminated." (2, p.4) A further goal was the development of an instrument that was sensitive to experience and could be used to demonstrate changes associated with educational intervention. The instrument consists of 64 items covering four general areas, identified factorially as: Personal-Social Responsiveness, Associative Vocabulary, Concept-Activation-Numerical, and Concept Activation-Sensory.

Scores on both the Walker and the Caldwell were converted into normal curve equivalency (NCE) scores. Although the Caldwell manual reports percentiles which are necessary to derive NCE scores, local norms were constructed, since they were felt to be more representative. The cumulative percentage curve method described by Guilford (3) was employed. Percentiles were derived from scores on 1,796 children. NCE scores were derived from the conversion tables developed by the RMC Research Corporation, Mountain View, California.

I. Program Outcome Measures

The general educational goal of the ECE Program is to provide sound educational experiences and activities for developing the abilities of very young children who are educationally disadvantaged. Three specific objectives for each of the two criterion instruments were derived from the general goal. These objectives, the instruments used, and the degree to which each objective was reached are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1

DEGREE OF MEETING PROGRAM OBJECTIVES IN DAYTON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM, 1977-1978

Specific Objectives	Name and Type of Evaluation Instrument Used	Degree or Per Cent to Which Objective Was Reached
Fifty percent (50%) of the children will show a performance increase in readiness skills of at least 25 points on the NCE scale.	Walker Readiness Test for Disadvantaged Preschool Children, Forms A and B. Form A used as criterion measure for admission to program and as pre-test in September. Form B used as post-test in late May.	Objective exceeded. Fourteen percent (14%) of the children increased between 25 and 34 NCE points, while 62% increased more than 35 points, making 78% increasing more than 25 points.
Twenty-five percent (25%) will increase 35 or more NCE points.	Same as above.	Objective exceeded. 62% increased more than 35 NCE points.
Twenty-five percent (25%) will increase at least 15 NCE points.	Same as above.	Objective exceeded for all but 13% of children who had smaller NCE gains than 15. Ten percent (10%) had gains between 15 and 24 NCE points.
Fifty percent (50%) of the children will demonstrate an increase in performance of at least 20 NCE points in the four areas considered necessary for success in school.	Cooperative Preschool Inventory (B. Caldwell)	Objective exceeded. Sixteen percent (16%) of children increased between 20 and 29 NCE points while seventy-one percent (71%) increased more than 30 points, 87% being above 20 points.
Twenty-five percent (25%) will increase 30 NCE points or more.	Same as above.	Objective exceeded. Seventy-one percent (71%) increased more than 30 points.
Twenty-five percent (25%) will increase at least 12 NCE points.	Same as above.	Objective exceeded for all but 4% of children who had smaller NCE gains than 12. Nine percent (9%) increased between 12 and 19 NCE points.

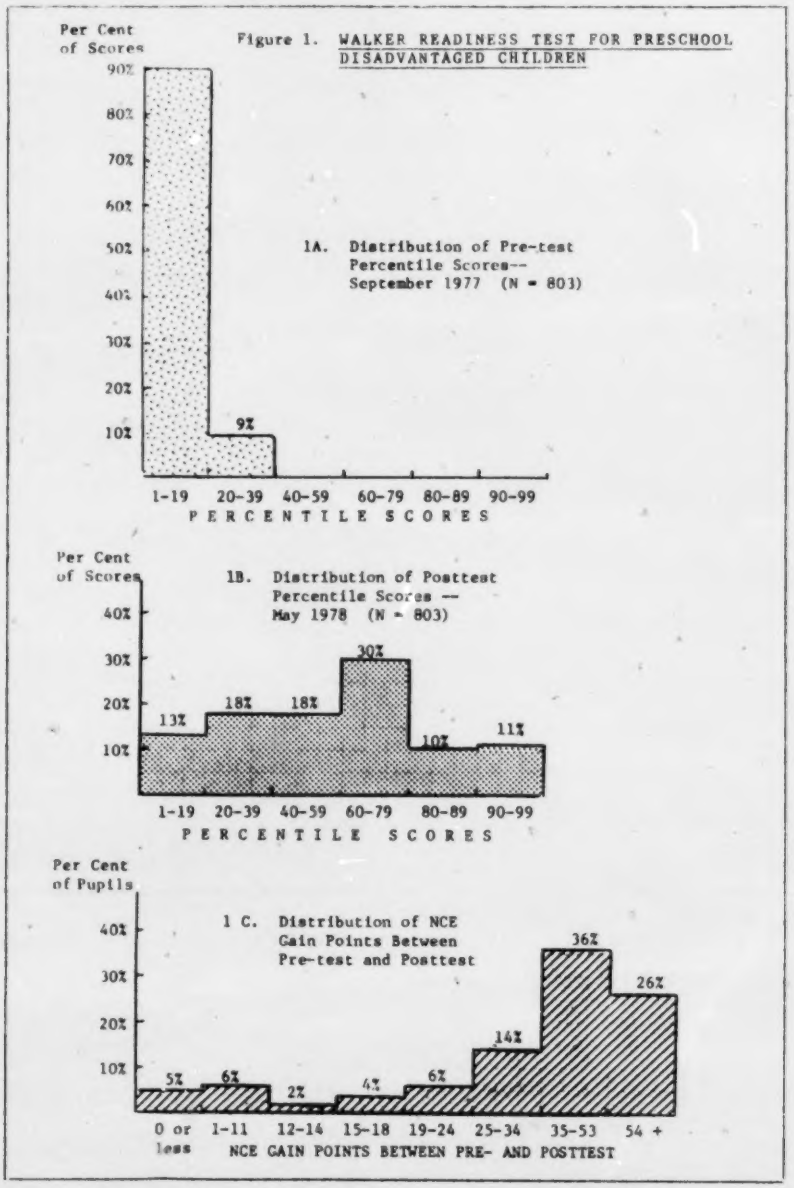
The results from the two criterion tests indicate that the specific objectives of the program were not only well attained, but, for most of the participants, greatly exceeded.

Only a relatively small number of children (13% on the Walker and 4% on the Caldwell) failed to achieve the projected minimum NCE attainment change score, suggesting that the program had some measureable impact on almost every child. These results compare with last year's 5% and 9% on the Walker and Caldwell, respectively. The increased number of children who failed to show an increase of at least 15 NCE points on the Walker is puzzling and requires some investigation. Three percent (3%), or twenty-eight (28) children made lower scores on the post-evaluation than they did on the pre-program examination.

The mean NCE increment scores of 40.1 on the Walker and 39.3 on the Caldwell indicate the large average magnitude of the program's effect. These scores are based on N's of 803 and 777 for the two tests, respectively. Last year's mean NCE increment scores were 46.2 and 28.7 points on the same two tests. As noted previously, there was a clear impression from previous years that Caldwell pre-program scores were considerably inflated when the initial evaluation was delayed to allow teachers to become more familiar with children's abilities and potentials. The present results support the hypothesis that some teachers evaluated more on what they expected or wanted to believe than on actual performance.

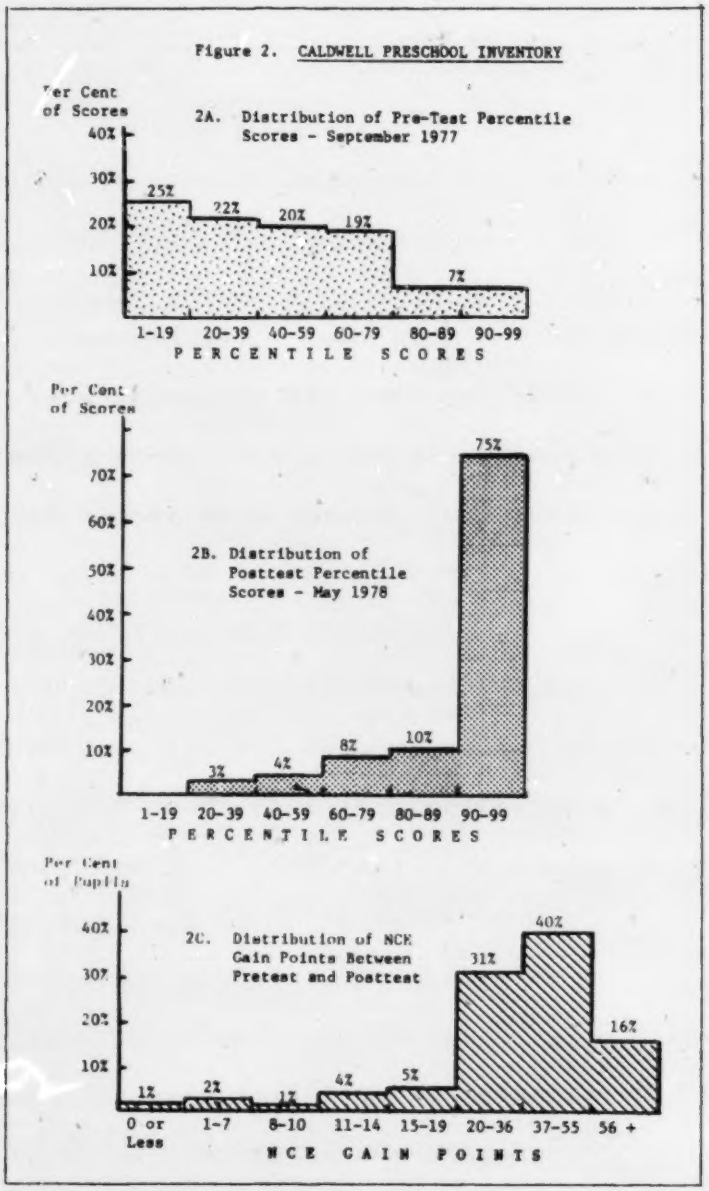
There were also some other interesting data based on these two instruments which bear further investigation in subsequent cycles. Based upon an N of 73, late enrollees in the program increased an average of only 22.1 NCE points on the Caldwell, but 37 late enrollees gained 38.4 NCE points on the Walker. The implications of these findings cannot be assessed at this time, but they do lend themselves to some interesting speculations.

Distributions of Walker pre- and post-percentile scores and of the resulting NCE gain scores are given in Figure 1 below. As indicated in 1A, not only did the selection process adhere to the criterion of "below 33%", but 90% of the Walker scores were below the 20th percentile. Posttest scores were weighted above the 60th percentile, confirming the effectiveness of the ECE Program. Specific objectives of the program may be referred to in considering the NCE gain range of 1C.



Distribution of the pre- and posttest percentile scores for the Caldwell Preschool Inventory are given in Figure 2 below, with the posttest showing a marked change. With 87% of the children tested in ECE achieving more than 20 NCE (normal curve equivalent) gain points, this substantiates the effectiveness of the Early Childhood Education Program in the Dayton Schools.

Figure 2. CALDWELL PRESCHOOL INVENTORY



II. Results of Walker Re-Administration

Staff and financial resources have limited each evaluation cycle to pre- and post-evaluations on all criterion instruments. Of special interest is the Walker which has been used both as a selection instrument for six years and as one of the two criterion tasks for measuring the program outcome objectives.

A pre-post-design reveals nothing about the rate of growth of the skills/abilities measured by the instrument, but only the total growth which occurs in a given time period. It is important to know the rate of growth and when the optimum growth has been obtained for the time invested, i.e., a cost/benefit ratio. A simple first attempt to provide some information on these issues was accomplished this year. It was possible to have the Walker administered on a third occasion--in December, 1977--to add to the standard evaluation periods in September, 1977, and May, 1978. The original plan called for another administration in March, but a combination of unexpected school closings during the winter and other factors made it infeasible.

Seventy-five (75) children, 36 boys and 39 girls, from fifteen centers, representing a wide range of initial scores (0 to 21), were selected for this pilot study. Twelve (12) of the 75 were unavailable for the final assessment in May. Observations of the children's rapid growth on many cognitive skills in the first few months after entering the program had suggested that, as a group, children seemed to achieve near maximum growth in that time, with the subsequent time a period of consolidation and integration. The results of the three examination periods for the 63 cases are given in Table 2 with the raw scores grouped in intervals of five.

TABLE 2
DISTRIBUTION OF WALKER SCORES ON REPEATED ADMINISTRATIONS N = 63

Scores	Time Periods		
	Sept.	Dec.	May
0-4	7		
5-9	18		
10-14	23	2	
15-19	14	5	1
20-24	1	18	4
25-29		23	2
30-34		11	10
35-39		4	16
40-44			19
45-50			11
MEAN	10.7	25.3	37.8
Difference Between Means	+14.6	+12.5	

Figures 3A, 3B, and 3C present this information in graphic form, giving the percentages in each interval.

It is very evident from this distribution that there is steady growth in successive time periods and that almost as much growth occurs from December to May as from September to December. There certainly is a very rapid growth spurt in the early months which is felt to be a function primarily of improved listening and concentration skills. It should also be noted that no children with initial scores above the 33rd percentile were included, since that level was selected as the cut-off point for inclusion in the program.

A visual review of the 63 individual sets of scores did not reveal any obvious growth regularities, i.e., children scoring high or low initially appeared to show equal likelihood of attaining similar scores on the second or third administrations. No statistical tests were performed on this initial data. What is apparent is that there are steady performance gains on the several complex abilities/skills measured by the Walker. The significance of these findings is, at the present, primarily empirical, but will be investigated further during the next evaluation cycle.

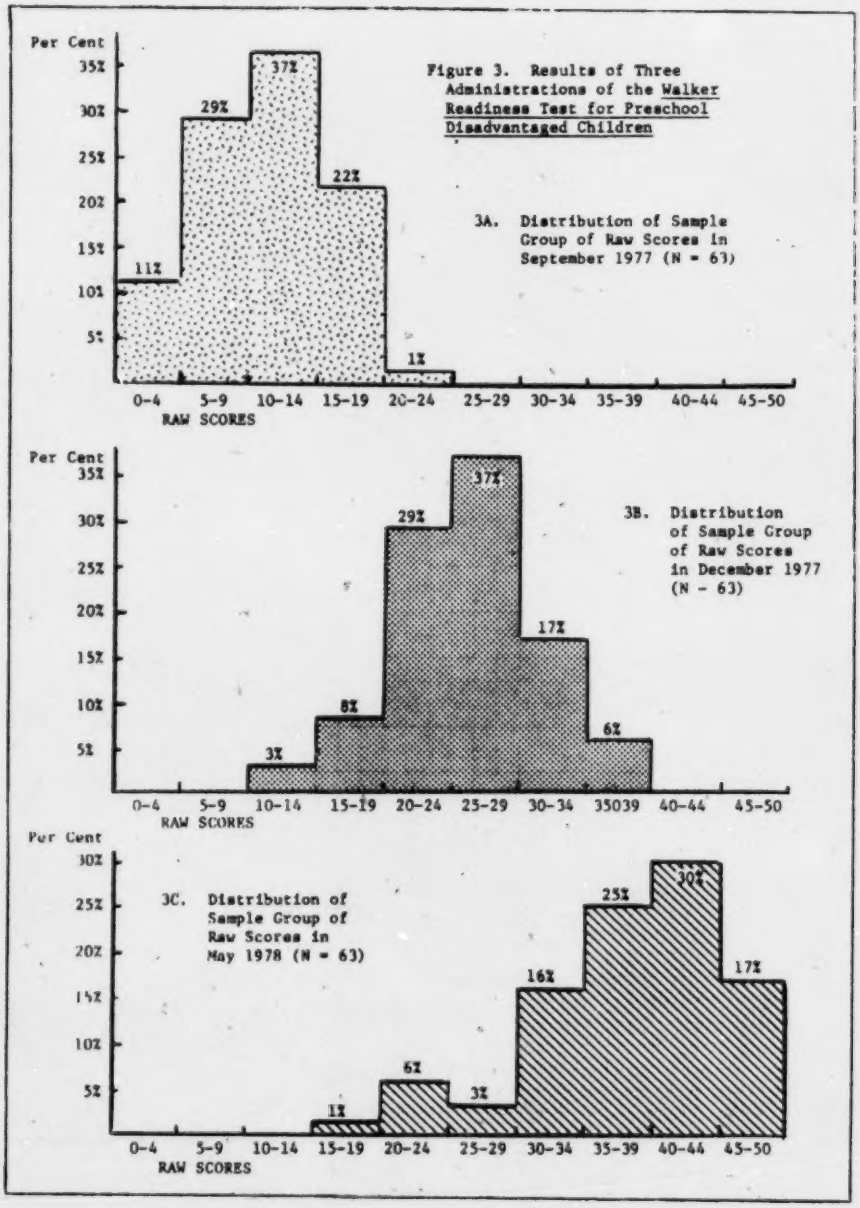


Figure 3. Results of Three Administrations of the Walker Readiness Test for Preschool Disadvantaged Children

III. Individual Performance Objectives

Specific performance objectives had been developed in the previous year, but were not completed for the post-evaluation phase. Although the data were not used then, experience with the material made it possible to eliminate items which were not discriminating, were too easy or too hard, etc., for the next year.

Along with a revised array of performance objectives, the process of compiling and reporting the results for the three evaluation periods was also computerized. The procedure provides each parent with a printed display of the child's performance on 83 items for each of three evaluation periods (September, January/February, and May/June), allowing for easy comparisons. Each teacher also receives copies of the computer-generated performance assessments of children in her classes for her own records and for her regular conferences with the parents to interpret and discuss the results.

The content of the items was grouped following the general format of the Caldwell. Since the Caldwell was used as one of the two program criterion instruments and much of the content was consistent with specific target behaviors, about 25 of the 81 performance objectives were drawn directly from the Caldwell. The other 56 items (some of which were merely extensions or variations of the same concept, e.g., copying different numerals, identifying the primary colors by name, etc.) were selected because they represent basic skills which are required to do successful kindergarten and primary level work. Two other items, making a total of 83, are much more judgmental and require the teacher to assess the degree of social and emotional maturity.

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN PASSING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

	SEP	JAN	JUN
I. PERSONAL - SOCIAL RESPONSE -			
1. STATES FIRST NAME	70	83	95
2. STATES LAST NAME	23	48	78
3. RECOGNIZES PRINTED FIRST NAME	16	60	88
4. RECOGNIZES PRINTED LAST NAME	3	17	55
5. PRINTS FIRST NAME	2	21	50
6. PRINTS LAST NAME	1	5	22
7. STATES AGE	90	86	94
IDENTIFIES THE BODY PARTS-			
8. SHOULDER	60	85	97
9. HEEL	20	54	78
10. HEAD	90	96	98
11. BACK	92	95	99
STATES NAMES OF THESE BODY PARTS-			
12. FINGER	78	88	98
13. KNEE	50	80	94
14. ELBOW	55	74	92
TELLS -			
15. LEFT	11	19	39
16. RIGHT	9	20	41
17. RAISES HAND	90	95	100
18. JUMPS	86	94	100
19. SAYS HELLO VERY LOUDLY	76	80	96
20. WIGGLES	65	73	95
21. PUTS 3 CARS IN BIG BOX	50	64	88
22. PUTS RED CAR ON BLACK BOX	45	61	87
23. PUTS YELLOW CAR ON LITTLE BOX	44	50	78
24. PUTS BLUE CAR UNDER GREEN BOX	40	48	[illegible]
25. PUTS CARS BEHIND BOX IN MIDDLE	25	33	[illegible]
26. GIVES EVERYTHING TO TEACHER	50	58	86
II. ASSOCIATIVE VOCABULARY			
27. DEMONSTRATES AWARENESS OF WORD MEANINGS	39	44	[illegible]
28. EXPRESSES IDEAS IN SIMPLE SENTENCES (MINIMUM TO WORDS)	11	52	[illegible]
DESCRIBES VERBALLY-			
29. OBJECTS (TOY, FRUIT)	20	26	[illegible]
30. EVENTS (TRIP, PARTY)	38	22	[illegible]
31. RELATIONS (THINGS THAT GO TOGETHER)	25	17	[illegible]
32. TELLS A STORY OR EVENT IN SEQUENCE	12	18	54
33. LISTENS IN ORDER TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS	38	43	66
34. NAMES LOWER CASE LETTERS	2	4	[illegible]
35. NAMES UPPER CASE LETTERS	3	8	[illegible]
III. CONCEPT ACTIVATION-NUMERICAL			
ABLE TO TELL HOW MANY IN A CONCRETE GROUP OF OBJECTS AFTER COUNTING			
36. 0-5	30	57	[illegible]
37. 6-10	10	34	[illegible]
38. USES NUMBER WORDS SEQUENTIALLY WHEN COUNTING	34	52	[illegible]
MAKES JUDGEMENTS OF-			
39. MORE	59	69	[illegible]
40. LESS	23	36	60

TABLE 3 (continued)

	SEP	JAN	JUN
41. BIGGER	59	80	95
42. SLOWER	48	63	87
43. HEAVIER	52	68	90
RECOGNIZES SERIATED POSITIONS -			
44. FIRST	22	49	75
45. LAST	12	27	54
46. MIDDLE	30	43	74
47. SECOND	10	16	39
IDENTIFIES THE FOLLOWING NUMERALS BY NAME -			
48. 0	13	36	67
49. 1	31	63	86
50. 2	17	45	70
51. 3	17	44	71
52. 4	18	45	68
IDENTIFIES THESE NUMERALS BY NAME -			
53. 5	15	42	67
54. OTHERS	4	14	41
COPIES THESE NUMERALS -			
55. 0	35	58	83
56. 1	38	65	90
57. 2	5	17	42
58. 3	4	15	41
59. 4	5	13	39
60. 5	2	10	31
61. OTHERS		6	25
V. CONCEPT ACTIVATION-SENSORY			
IDENTIFIES THESE GEOMETRIC SHAPES BY NAME -			
62. CIRCLE	50	83	96
63. LINE (VERTICAL)	50	56	84
64. TRIANGLE	29	66	90
65. SQUARE	27	63	89
66. OTHER		20	56
COPIES THESE GEOMETRIC SHAPES -			
67. CIRCLE	55	84	95
68. LINE (VERTICAL)	55	75	95
69. TRIANGLE	13	38	65
70. SQUARE	20	50	80
IDENTIFIES THESE COLORS BY NAME -			
71. RED	58	77	90
72. YELLOW	45	68	87
73. BLUE	36	63	83
74. ORANGE	52	73	89
75. GREEN	39	69	85
76. PURPLE	30	58	82
77. BROWN	32	63	83
78. BLACK	50	74	86
79. WHITE	55	70	85
80. FITS OBJECTS TOGETHER ACCORDING TO A PLAN OR PATTERN (PUZZLES, BEADS)	33	37	76
81. REARRANGES OBJECTS IN SPACE (BLOCKS, COLOR CONE, NESTING TOYS)	30	31	74
82. THE CHILD IS SOCIALLY -			
A. MATURE		22	45
B. SOMEWHAT MATURE		57	45
C. IMMATURE		21	10
83. THE CHILD IS EMOTIONALLY -			
A. MATURE		23	44
B. SOMEWHAT MATURE		58	46
C. IMMATURE		19	10

These 83 items represent a wide range of basic cognitive skills necessary for children to have achieved if they are to be able to acquire other more complex skills, such as reading. A survey of their content indicates a broad overlap with the typical kindergarten curriculum.

Table 3 presents the content of the 83 items, numbered and titled as they appear on the computer-generated report, the three assessment periods, and the percentage of children passing each item. A review of the results indicated a high level of achievement in attaining the specific performance objectives by the end of the school year. The following table, Table 4, shows the number and percentage of items achieving various passing rates.

TABLE 4

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGES OF ITEMS ATTAINING DIFFERENT PASSING RATE STANDARDS

Passing Rate Standards for Items	Number of Items Attaining Standard	Percentage of 83 Items
75%	50	62%
65%	58	70%
50%	69	85%

If one sets a rigorous 75% passing standard for items, 62% or 50 of the items are included, while a 50% standard includes 85% of the items. Closer examination shows that many of the low rates of passing were clustered in certain skill/performance areas where the failure of one part reasonably predicts the failure of the rest, e.g., copying numerals and naming lower and upper case letters.

IV. Teacher Program Assessment

An important aspect of any program and a major criterion of its success is consumer satisfaction. The ECE Program, actually, has several consumer populations:

(1) the children who are enrolled,

(2) their parents, and

(3) the teachers at other levels who, subsequently, have ECE enrollees in their classes.

Parent attitudes and satisfaction measures have been assessed formally in previous years and are, informally, an intrinsic part of the program through the Parent Advisory Council and parent conferences.

It was decided this year to ask teachers who are the most immediate recipients of the ECE enrollees -- kindergarten and first grade teachers -- to evaluate the Program. A relatively brief questionnaire which included both forced-choice and open-end questions/statements was designed for mail distribution to all kindergarten and first grade teachers in those schools with ECE centers.

A total of 118 questionnaires was mailed to teachers in late May through the school mails, with a request to return them within two weeks. All replies were anonymous. Forty (40), or 34%, were returned, but only 37 returns, or 31%, were usable. The return rate was, unfortunately, consistent with most mail surveys.

A copy of the questionnaire and cover letter are included as Appendix A.

The results of the individual questions in Parts I and II of the survey are given in Table 5, on the following pages.

TABLE 5

RESULTS OF EVALUATION SURVEY OF 37 KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE TEACHERS IN TITLE I SCHOOLS, WHO HAD TAUGHT PUPILS WHO HAD BEEN IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

PART I

Type of Teacher	Number of Years of Teaching Experience	Years of Personal Experience with ECE Children
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	Average: 15.2 years	Average: 6.2 years
FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	Average: 16.5 years	Average: 7.1 years

1. How well prepared for regular classroom experience would you rate ECE children as compared with children who have not been in the ECE Program?

	Much better prepared		Better prepared		No difference		Less well prepared		Can't say	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	7	39%	10	56%	0	0	0	0	1	5%
FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	3	17%	9	53%	5	30%	0	0	0	0

2. Based upon your personal experiences, are you able to identify most children in your classes who have been in the ECE Program without having specific factual information about them?

	YES		NO	
	No.	%	No.	%
KDG. TEACHERS	14	74%	5	16%
1ST GR. TEACHERS	9	50%	9	50%

What is there about most ECE children's behavior, attitudes, or performance that you feel distinguishes them from other children?

KINGERGARTEN TEACHERS

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL FACTORS
- More socially, emotionally, adjusted (10)
- Come to school on time
- Take responsibility
- Relate more easily with adults
- More talkative
- Work better with others
- Positive attitude toward school
- More outgoing & aggressive
- Better self-discipline

COGNITIVE FACTORS
- Better socially adjusted (3)
- More experience
- Good manners
- More comfortable in classroom
- Poor behavior and attitude toward school
- Better organized
- Inquiring mind
- Listen better (2)
- Better prepared(2)
- Better attention span
- Follow directions
- Better vocabulary
- More alert
- Know more(2)

1ST GRADE TEACHERS

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL FACTORS
- More mentally prepared (10)
- Ready to listen (4)
- Try varied activities (2)
- More interested
- Interpret information with more factual background

3. If you could choose one special group of children for your classes, which one of the following groups would you prefer to have?

	Children Who Have Been in Nursery School or Day Care Programs		ECE Children		Children Who Have Not Been in ECE		No Preference	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	0	0	14	74%	1	5%	4	21%
FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	0	0	10	59%	1	6%	6	35%

4. As compared with children who have not been in the ECE Program, do you find teaching ECE children:

	Much more difficult		More difficult		No difference		Less difficult		Much less difficult	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	0	0	0	0	2	11%	12	67%	4	22%
FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	0	0	2	10%	5	28%	10	56%	1	6%

5. In your opinion, have the benefits for children justified the effort and money spent for the ECE Program?

	YES		NO	
	No.	%	No.	%
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	18	100%	0	0
FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	15	84%	3	16%

Please Explain

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS —
- Very beneficial
- Made each a healthier, happier somebody
- Get along with others
- Do things on their own
- Progress more rapidly
- Work independently
- Early intervention is important

FIRST GRADE TEACHERS —
- Better prepared
- Stronger background
- Provides prerequisite skills
- Start without wasting time
- More teaching and less social amenities

6. In your opinion, how could the program be changed or improved to be of greater value to children?

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS —
- Focus on needy child
- Involve all children (2)
- Enroll 3-year-olds
- Meet with ECE teachers during the year
- More opportunities to see the city
- All centers use the same curriculum
- Reinstate aides
- More abstract things
- Nursery rhymes
- More field trips

FIRST GRADE TEACHERS —
- Involve parents more (2)
- Expand to include all preschool children
- Reevaluate criteria to include bright children without experience
- Need stronger teachers and aides
- Smaller classes
- Good as is

TABLE 5 (continued)

PART 2

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. ECE children are more self-sufficient than other children when they enroll in regular educational activities.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	4	22%	11	61%	2	11%	1	6%	0	0%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	1	6%	10	55%	4	22%	1	6%	2	11%
2. Most four-year-old children are too young to be in school.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	1	5%	1	5%	2	11%	6	32%	9	47%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	2	11%	0	0%	1	6%	10	55%	5	28%
3. ECE children listen and are more attentive in school than other children of similar socio-economic backgrounds.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	3	17%	9	50%	2	11%	3	17%	1	5%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	2	11%	6	33%	6	33%	3	17%	1	6%
4. The ECE Program makes children easier to manage or control when they get in regular classrooms.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	3	17%	9	50%	3	17%	2	11%	1	5%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	2	11%	6	33%	5	28%	3	17%	2	11%
5. Children show substantial gains in cognitive skills while in the ECE Program.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	4	25%	12	75%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	2	11%	10	55%	4	22%	2	11%	0	0%
6. Children learn as much in play-oriented nursery programs as in cognitively structured curricula such as ECE.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	1	5%	2	12%	1	5%	8	45%	6	33%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	1	5%	5	28%	4	22%	6	33%	2	11%
7. The ECE Program is a good investment of time and money.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	12	67%	5	28%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	8	44%	6	33%	2	11%	1	6%	1	6%
8. Early intervention programs such as ECE have a significant impact on later school achievement.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	10	59%	6	35%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	4	22%	7	39%	4	22%	2	11%	1	6%
9. Fewer ECE children require later remedial education than children of comparable backgrounds who have not been in the program.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	1	6%	8	50%	7	44%	0	0%	0	0%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	1	6%	5	31%	6	38%	3	19%	1	6%
10. The ECE Program should be made available to all preschool aged children regardless of family income.	KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS	11	61%	4	22%	2	11%	1	6%	0	0%
	FIRST GRADE TEACHERS	10	55%	3	17%	1	6%	4	22%	0	0%

The general evaluation of the ECE Program by the approximately one-third of the kindergarten and first grade teachers who responded to the questionnaire was, on the whole, positive. Kindergarten teachers responded more favorably as a group than did first grade teachers, a not unexpected finding in view of the less immediate contact with the children, all of whom, also, were exposed to a wide variety of kindergarten experiences. Despite the varied experiences, teacher styles, class size, etc., this group of first grade teacher respondees, in general, perceive very positive differences in the children who have been in ECE.

It is especially noteworthy that, following a one-year break between ECE and first grade, 70% of the first grade teachers still see ECE children as better prepared for "regular" school; 59% would prefer to have them in their classes; 62% find them less or much less difficult in classes; and 72% feel the program should be extended to all pre-school children regardless of family income.

Kindergarten teachers gave overwhelming support to almost every facet of the program tapped by the questionnaire, although they did not respond quantitatively in much greater numbers than first grade teachers, 19 to 18. Ninety-five percent (95%) regard ECE-trained children as better or much better prepared for regular classroom experience than other comparable children; 74% would prefer ECE-trained children in their classes; 89% find them much easier to teach; 83% regard them as more self-sufficient; 67% perceive them as easier to manage; 100% believe they show substantial gains in cognitive skills in the ECE program; 95% feel the program is a good investment of time and money; and 83% believe it should be made available to all pre-school children.

Recommendations for improving or changing the program focused primarily on positive issues: expanding the program, adding 3-year-olds, increasing staff size, making classes smaller, and increasing communication with elementary school teachers. Although based upon a smaller number of respondents than had been hoped for, the survey indicated that those who did respond placed a high value on the program and its "product" -- disadvantaged children better prepared to assume more complex learning tasks with greater responsibility and capacity. The perennial question of the attitudes and opinions of the non-responders remains unanswered, as it does in any study.

V. Preliminary Follow-Up of ECE Children in Title I and DPPF Reading Programs

Several caveats are offered in presenting preliminary data about ECE children enrolled in Title I and DPPF reading programs. First, there is a question about how to evaluate such data, i.e., what does selection for the program represent? Does it indicate failure or success for the ECE child or are the selection criteria inappropriate or unrelated to the purposes of the ECE Program, making it a moot question? One certainly has to know and to evaluate the Title I/DPPF selection criteria, since they may be so broad, so difficult, and/or discriminatory in unidentified ways that it is difficult to label those who are chosen.

Two, it has been very difficult to track children after they leave the ECE Program. Children often leave the system or are dispersed widely by frequent moves or by the mandated busing plan. Many children's identities are simply lost in the school system because there does not exist any permanent individual coding or identification system which provides for easy tracking.

Third, it was not possible to obtain the desired level of reliable information on either program population which further limits the usefulness of the data. With these limitations in mind, plus several others to be noted, the following tentative data are presented. The data take into account pairing of schools under the busing plan, but do not include children who have moved out of Title I schools within the district or out of the Dayton City School District altogether. Rosters of all ECE children enrolled during the school years 1972-73 through 1976-77 were matched against the computer print-outs of Title I/DPPF Reading Programs for kindergarten and grades 1 through 4.

TABLE 2

COMPARISON OF ECE-TRAINED CHILDREN WITH NON-ECE TRAINED CHILDREN ENROLLED IN SPECIAL ASSISTANCE READING PROGRAMS 1977-78

Grade Level	Total Number of Children Enrolled in Special Assistance Reading Programs	Number of Children Formerly ECE	PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN	
			ECE-Trained	Non-ECE-Trained
Kindergarten (8 schools)	264	85	32.2%	67.8%
1	224	76	33.9%	66.1%
2	265	75	28.3%	71.7%
3	254	62	24.3%	75.7%
4	321	65	20.3%	79.7%
1-4	1,064	278	26.1%	74.9%

These preliminary data suggest that, within the limitations noted, relatively few ECE children of those still within the Dayton City School District, and still attending Title I schools are enrolled in Title I/DPPF Reading Programs. Such data suggest that the ECE Program prepares the majority of its enrollees to perform adequately the tasks for which the Title I/DPPF remediation programs exist, making their participation in these programs unnecessary. If a logical goal relationship between the Dayton ECE Program and these remediation reading programs can be demonstrated and other conditions satisfied, these data would assume greater significance. It is planned to investigate this area further during the next evaluation cycle.

SUMMARY

With the conclusion of the 1977-78 school year, the Dayton Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) completed its thirteenth year of operation. The specific evaluation plan for the program has changed several times during that period, but the general strategy has remained consistent throughout. The original plan was designed to evaluate not only the immediate impact of the ECE Program on children then enrolled, but, also, included a plan to assess whether the program had any lasting effects as these children progressed through kindergarten and subsequent grades. In view of the wealth of evidence concerning the short-term effects of pre-kindergarten education with continued and relevant assistance through the early grades, an approach which emphasized planned annual assessments of each cycle as long as possible was felt to be critical.

Eligibility standards for admission to the program were changed, beginning with the 1972-73 school year. The program was opened to any child of appropriate age living within a Title I school neighborhood or adjacent areas whose performance on a selection test met the criterion. Since the first year, the selection cut-off point for admission has become more rigorous, with admissions this year limited to children scoring at or below the thirty-third percentile on the criterion test. Despite increasing rigor, studies have continued to show changes beyond the expected seven months' gain between pre- and posttest in the program year.

Three years ago the more extensive, in-depth studies of a large random sample of children were terminated because of mandated shift to specific performance/behavior objectives. However, until this

year, some fairly extensive follow-up data were still collected. The results during the past ten years (all of which are provided in highly consistent detail in previous annual evaluation reports) have been highly consistent and have become relatively predictable. An intriguing point is the striking similarity between the Dayton ECE Program results and the general conclusions which have been drawn from a sample of much better publicized programs across the country. That material will be described in more detail later in this section.

Working within the regulatory guidelines and fiscal constraints of the program, this year's evaluation focused on five major areas:

(1) Measurement of program objectives;

(2) An empirical investigation of performance on one of the criterion instruments;

(3) An evaluation of individual performance objectives;

(4) Assessments by kindergarten and first grade teachers; and

(5) Preliminary follow-up data of ECE children in Title I and DPPF Reading Programs.

The same two criterion tasks, the Walker Readiness Test for Disadvantaged Pre-School Children (Walker) and the Pre-School Inventory (Caldwell), were used to measure the program's effectiveness. Three specific objectives for each of the two criterion measures were projected. The results indicate that the objectives were not only attained, but exceeded to a significant degree. Only a small number of children failed to achieve the projected minimum standard attainment score on either measure. Mean increment scores derived from data on about 800 children on each of the instruments were of a significant magnitude, viz., 40.1 and 39.3 on the Walker and Caldwell, respectively.

The general educational goal of the ECE Program is to provide sound educational experiences and activities for developing the abilities of very young children who are educationally disadvantaged. The two criterion instruments measure cognitive skills, such as similarities, differences, numerical analogies, and missing parts, as well as listening ability and visual acuity (Walker), and areas which are described as personal-social responsiveness, association vocabulary, concept activation-numerical, and concept activation-sensory, for the Caldwell. These skills are clearly related to the general goal of the program.

The re-administration of the Walker on three occasions demonstrated empirically that there is continuous growth throughout the seven months on the skills measured by the test. A very rapid growth spurt occurs within the first three months which is believed due primarily to much improved listening skills.

Eighty-three (83) individual performance objectives were selected as target behaviors. The content was grouped following the general format of the Caldwell, from which about one-third of the items were chosen. The remaining majority was chosen because they represent basic skills which are requisite to doing successful kindergarten and primary level work. The results indicated a high level of achievement in attaining the performance objectives. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the group attained a rigorous individual item passing standard of 75%, while lowering the criterion to a 50% passing rate for all items included 85% of the group.

As an important "consumer" group of the ECE Program, a mail questionnaire was sent to all kindergarten and first grade teachers in the schools with ECE centers, asking them to assess various aspects of

the ECE Program. Opinions/attitudes were solicited in such areas as the preparation of ECE children for regular classroom experience, the characteristics of ECE children, preferences of identified groups of children, management problems, etc. The general evaluation of the program by the approximately one-third of the teachers who responded was, on the whole, overwhelmingly positive. Kindergarten teachers responded more favorably as a group than did first grade teachers, but the comparison was one of degree of positivism. Even changes for the program focused primarily on positive issues, such as adding three-year-olds, increasing staff size, and expanding the program to include all pre-school children.

The final aspect of the evaluation was an attempt to collect some preliminary data on the number of children enrolled in the Title I/DPPF reading Programs. A host of methodological and other issues was noted. However, preliminary data suggest that, within the many limitations noted, relatively few ECE children attending Title I schools are enrolled in Title I/DPPF Reading Programs.

The results from this year's evaluation again lend support to the effectiveness of the program as an early remediation and preventive effort. It reverses, to a measurable degree, the cognitive deficits frequently associated with disadvantaged status and provides an impetus to further learning through the acquisition of skills necessary to make kindergarten and early primary grades a relative success. It is also felt to act similarly on social and emotional functioning, but "objective" data in these areas have not been collected systematically. Kindergarten and first grade teacher respondents gave overwhelming support to the cognitive features of the program and also endorsed positively the few questions touching upon social/emotional functioning.

As a relatively longer-range program of remediation and prevention, ECE's effectiveness is to a large measure dependent upon the quality of subsequent educational exposure and the degree to which children are met and challenged at their individual skill and developmental levels and have reinforced the skills and learning acquired in the ECE Program. Although programs of early intervention are a major factor in affecting subsequent school performance, short-term programs cannot do the job by themselves. It has probably been stated best by Bereiter in terms of an analogy:

> "To treat the eventual vanishing of preschool effects as failure is to imply either that preschool compensatory education is futile or that the effective method has yet to be discovered. Either of these conclusions could be true, but those who think they follow from current evidence are applying criteria of success to pre-school education that are not applied in any realm of human effort. They are asking the doctor for a pill they can take when they are ten that will prevent them from getting fat when they are fifty." (4, p.13, underlining not in original)

In a relatively recent comprehensive survey of preschool programs, edited by the distinguished child psychologist, Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner, entitled, A Report on Longitudinal Evaluations of PreSchool Programs, Vol. II: Is Early Intervention Effective? (5), a summary of research results is given which is strikingly similar to those of thirteen years of experience in the Dayton ECE program. The following results are quoted directly from the concluding section. "VIII. Facts and Principles of Early Intervention: A Summary" (5, pp 52-53), under the sub-section in Preschool Intervention in Group Settings.

a. "Almost without exception, children showed substantial gains in IQ and other cognitive measures during the first year of the program, attaining or even exceeding the average for their age.

b. "Cognitively structured curricula produced greater gains than play-oriented nursery programs.

c. "Neither earlier entry into the program (from age one), nor a longer period of enrollment (up to five years) resulted in greater or more enduring cognitive gains.

d. "By the first or second year after completion of the program, sometimes while it was still in operation, the children began to show a progressive decline, and by the third or fourth year of follow-up, had fallen back into the problem range of the lower 90's and below . . . . .

e. "The period of sharpest decline occurred after the child's entry into regular school. Preliminary data from the Follow-Through Program suggest that this decline may be offset by the continuation of intervention programs, including strong parent involvement, into the early grades.

f. "The children who profited least from the program, and who showed the earliest and most rapid decline, were those who came from the most deprived social and economic backgrounds. Especially relevant in this regard were such variables as the number of children in the family, the employment status of the head of the household, the level of parents' education, and the presence of only one parent in the family.

g. "Results from a number of studies pointed to factors in and around the home as critical to the child's capacity to profit from group programs both in preschool and in the elementary grades. For example, several researches revealed that the greatest loss in cognitive performance of disadvantaged children living in favorable economic circumstances not only maintained their status, but showed significant gains."

Concerning conclusion a, it has been repeatedly demonstrated in the ECE program that children show "substantial gains in IQ and other cognitive measures". The results over the years have been consistent and strong.

Conclusion b, (above) cannot be supported or rejected by any results of the ECE Program, since no comparative studies between ECE and other nursery programs have been done. The most relevant data come from the teacher study done this year, in which ECE children were overwhelmingly preferred as compared with any other group. As a matter of fact, no kindergarten or first grade teacher chose nursery school graduates as a preferred group.

Results from the ECE Program are highly consistent with conclusion c. Three-year-olds did not perform at a higher level than four-year-olds, nor did a longer period of enrollment change that finding. Four-year-old initial enrollees quickly equalled the performance levels of three-year-olds who were in the program for a second year. While a number of alternate hypotheses were offered to explain the consistent finding, none of which was ever tested systematically, the most probable conclusion is that neither early entry nor longer involvement in the program really do make a difference.

The ECE Program findings have repeatedly confirmed conclusion d. There has been a consistently superior level of functioning upon entrance into kindergarten when compared with comparable children who have not been in ECE or a similar program, and somewhat more variable, but generally positive post-kindergarten results. By the first grade, overall superiority of the ECE children has been confirmed erratically, and by the second grade, has weakened to the point where minimal positive results were obtained only twice in the five cycles that were evaluated. Results repeatedly confirmed the critical importance of kindergarten in determining whether or not children who have been in the ECE Program are able to maintain their gains. Once the gain has been lost, no ECE cycle of children ever regained its superiority.

Some declines in performance were found in the first post-ECE year at the end of the kindergarten. In about one-third of the ECE cycles, ECE-trained children were not functioning any better than non-ECE children at the conclusion of the kindergarten year. The decline became more apparent in the first grade, consistent with conclusion e.

There is no direct evidence from the ECE Program that address conclusions b and g. The rapid attrition from year to year has made

it difficult to follow a large enough sample of children classified on relevant variables, such as the number of children in the family, one parent families, etc., to carry out the needed research. The degree of parental involvement in the ECE Program and the number of children from the same families who have now participated has perhaps served to offset some of the oft-found cognitive losses which occur over the summer. That is another area in need of research.

In the perspective of these nationwide conclusions, based upon results from such outstanding programs as Susan Gray's Early Training Project in Nashville, David Weikert's High Scope Project in Ypsilanti, and Beller's Temple University-Philadelphia Project, the Dayton ECE Program compares very favorably. It has accomplished many of the same goals and successes and has suffered from many of the same frustrations and failures which appear to be inherent in such programs. Within this year, however, the attitudes of early childhood educators and researchers have shifted from a posture of defending the effectiveness of early childhood programs to a search for answers to such questions as: "How does it work?" "For whom does it work?" and "How can it work better?"

The Developmental Continuity Consortium, formed in 1975 by twelve researchers who had conducted preschool experiments earlier, agreed to pool their findings and do follow-up interviews with their original children, some of whom are now in high school. The project was coordinated by Dr. Irving Lazar of Cornell University. The results were released within the past year and showed that children who had been exposed to some form of preschool education were far less likely to require special education or to be left back a grade. It was also found that achievement and IQ gains which were found

was also found that achievement and IQ gains which were found immediately after preschool and then seemed to wash out, reappeared later in the children's academic careers.

Dr. David Weikert has examined the cost-effectiveness of preschool education and "found the money saved by a school district from not having to provide special education for more than twelve years of school per child exceeded the initial cost of providing preschool." (6)

It is hoped that the Dayton ECE Program will be able to collect data in the same area during this next year and will also be able to focus more on the process of the ECE Program than on outcome which has already been firmly established.

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6. Report on Preschool Education, February 28, 1978. pp 7-8.

APPENDIX A

May 23, 1978

Dear Teacher:

The Dayton Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) is completing its thirteenth year of operation this year. During that time it has provided learning experiences to thousands of young children, some of whom are now nearing the completion of high school. Others are enrolled at different grade levels throughout the system.

As a teacher in the Dayton Schools, you have probably had personal contact with many former ECE children. We are conducting an extensive, long term, follow-up of ECE children and are asking your cooperation and participation in one phase of the evaluation. We are requesting you to complete the information on the following pages and return it through the school mail to the Early Childhood Office, Ft. Mc Kinley School, no later than June 9,1978.

Completing the material should take only about ten minutes or less of your time but will provide us with invaluable information. Your confidentiality is assured. You are not asked to identify yourself by name or school. (Of course, you may do so if you wish). We are requesting only your grade level, years of teaching experience and number of years of personal contact/ experience with children who have been in the ECE program.

On behalf of the ECE administration, teachers and supporting staff, we want to thank you in advance for your cooperation and for your prompt, candid responses.

Sincerely,

John A. Davis

Research Consultant

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION EVALUATION

PART I

Your grade level_____

No. of years teaching experience_____

No. of years personal experience with ECE children_____

_____

1. How well prepared for regular classroom experiences would you rate ECE children as compared with children who have not been in the ECE program?

   _____Much better prepared

   _____Better prepared

   _____No difference

   _____Less well prepared

   _____Can't say

2. Based upon your personal experiences, are you able to identify most children in your classes who have been in the ECE program without having specific factual information about them?

   _____Yes _____No

   What is there about most ECE children's behavior, attitudes or performance that you feel distinguishes them from other children?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. If you could choose one special group of children for your classes, which one of the following groups would you prefer to have?

   _____Children who have been in nursery school or day care programs

   _____ECE children

   _____Children who haven't been in ECE

   _____No preference

4. As compared with children who have not been in the ECE program, do you find teaching ECE children_____much more difficult_____more difficult _____less difficult_____much less difficult_____no difference.